

PART 10.

Third
Series

OCTOBER,
1889.

VOL.
2

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

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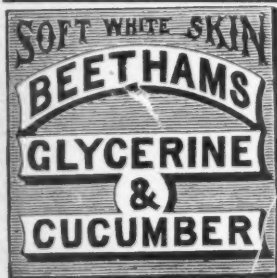
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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 40.—THIRD SERIES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1889.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"
"*A Faïre Damzell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V. OUT OF HIS ELEMENT.

CAN any of us be sure that along the path of life's daily routine we are not journeying to some great convulsion of our outward circumstances, or of our inward spiritual thought? Sometimes coming events, we are told, cast their shadows before them; we are seized with a dread that has no apparent cause, or we are urged to action by some unrecognised agency. Men or women of the world we may be, sceptics or believers, spiritually or carnally-minded, and yet to all, at special moments, there comes a great feeling of overshadowing mystery; other worlds are round us, and we peer vainly about us, trying to solve the riddle of life.

Hoel had not again seen Elva; his visit had terminated the next morning, and for some days he had been firmly settled in his luxurious bachelor quarters.

Here he felt superior to circumstances. He was not wealthy, but wanted nothing he could not procure. In the dim background he even occasionally contemplated an inheritance from his uncle, Mellish Fenner, who lived laborious days in doing nothing; but this inheritance Hoel despised, and did not reckon on it, or professed not to do so. Still, in his present condition, Hoel knew that he could not marry unless his wife were rich, and he was above hunting for riches.

Hoel had so many virtues, that it was difficult for his sins to find him out. He was high-minded in thought, word, and

deed; he was handsome; he was very clever, and possessed fine literary and critical faculty, which promised to make him a prince among critics. Several journals had already found this out, and only did not proclaim it for fear of rousing competition. Moreover, he had a just estimate of himself, which, on the one hand, prevented him from being conceited, and on the other from underestimating his powers, and therefore rendering them less useful to him. But Hoel was over-refined with that over-refinement which, though not in the least effeminate, seems slowly to kill the more rugged excellence which, for want of a better word, we may call a grand character.

Everything about Hoel Fenner helped this over-refinement to increase—that delightful sitting-room, furnished with exquisite taste, where he often gave afternoon tea to cousins, and cousins' cousins, and literary ladies and their friends; the dining-room, which was also his library, fitted with the best in literature, ancient and modern, not forgetting a row for individual taste, and which spoke well of the man. Yes, in Hoel's lodgings, from the butler to the books, everything was perfect; and the owner preferred his rooms to the Johnstonian Club, where pleasant men talked literary shop-gossip. Lately Hoel Fenner had been taking the work of the literary editor at "*The Current Reader's*" office. It was here he had come across Jesse Vicary, who had gone there to ask for reporting work; and Hoel had been attracted to him by that undefinable something which he possessed, and which Hoel vaguely felt was wanting in himself.

Such was Hoel Fenner; and yet, though we have placed one hand on the weak

spot, most of his friends and acquaintances would have rejected the idea of any imperfection in their hero.

As one of his friends said: "Hoel Fenner is a first-rate fellow; will make his mark—and a good deep dent it will be. No conceit, either, about him. Pity he doesn't marry, for there are so many girls ready to have him."

But Hoel had never given a chance to any of the many girls ready to have him. Men called him prudent; women liked him because "*Il ne faisait pas des jaloux*;" and yet any one looking deeper down below this perfect evenness of temperament, this perfect control of passion—if this word control can be used about something which gave him so little trouble—would have seen that all this betokened a want in his character.

Hoel had no family ties; that perhaps partly accounted for his defect. He had been left an orphan quite young, but Mellish Fenner had done his duty, and had looked upon his nephew as his adopted son. Hoel had responded gladly, even nobly to this call. His uncle had nothing to complain of, but just as he was going to college, Mellish Fenner had told his nephew that if he continued to give him satisfaction, he should inherit his fortune. Mr. Fenner put that "if" just to satisfy his love of power; to himself he said it was for Hoel's good; and in one sense it answered its purpose. Hoel's pride rose with a bound. He would be independent of all "ifs;" he would earn his own fortune, and his Uncle Mellish might, if he chose, leave his money to the London Hospital. On the other hand, that "if" caused Hoel to see clearly that his uncle was selfish, and from henceforth the courtesy he showed to the invalid came no more from love, but from a sense of superiority. He, Hoel, would never be selfish or exacting in this manner; he would not try to bind others to him by false ties; in fact, he would not be at all like his Uncle Mellish, but like a much higher caste of being—namely, Hoel Fenner.

Mellish Fenner never found out this reasoning, he only noted that Hoel was more and more praiseworthy; that he succeeded in all he undertook; and that, though he was now obliged to live in London, he was just as courteous and attentive when he ran down to Hastings to see him. The less Hoel required the money, the more his uncle determined he

should have it; but he could never bring himself to say: "Hoel, I am going to make my will in your favour." That bit of power over a younger and stronger life was too sweet to the old man.

At this time, therefore, Hoel was determined not to believe in Uncle Mellish's fortune, and he took great pains not to show increased tenderness for the poor hypochondriac, for fear it should be imagined that he was thinking of his money. And so those two who might have bestowed untold blessings on each other failed, just because that little word "if" had never been retracted.

This long explanation is needed to show both the greatness and the weakness of Hoel; but to-day, as he sat in his easy-chair over a small fire, he felt that since his return to town he had not been quite the same man. Something had ruffled the perfect evenness of his lake's surface, and that something was Elva Kestell!

Against his will he could see her with that glorious background of moorland; he could trace the tall figure; he could again look with pleasure at that glow of health, of youth, and passion of life which he had never seen before in any young woman. Crude as was her mind, she possessed that touch of the natural which made him, Hoel Fenner, with all his polish, recognise in her a true sketch from nature, not a highly-finished painting where much of the eternal truth has been improved away by bare imitation. Elva was a rugged sketch, true, if unfinished.

"But why did she throw away my flowers? Has she foolish ideas about not accepting flowers? No, that did not seem at all probable."

There was no answer to this question, and, feeling impatient at finding something he could not solve, Hoel took up a novel which had to be reviewed. It was weary work, but he was conscientious. He believed that criticism required the best from him; that the object was to advance art and not to display the reviewer's stilted sayings, which any tyro knows are merely a matter of habit. If he abused a book he did so believing that the author ought to be taught something or else choked off; but even honest reviewers are mortal, and this evening he felt so much disinclined to do his work that presently he threw down the book and put off the evil hour.

From Elva his mind naturally strayed to Vicary. It was strange that he should

just have hit upon the people who knew his early history—very strange. He opened his pocket-book and looked out his address. It was far away from Saint Anselm Street; but Hoel remembered he had promised to call if any work turned up, and, as it so happened that the sub-editor of "The Current Reader" wanted a shorthand writer to take down a particular lecture, Hoel decided that this should be his excuse for going out this evening, and, having finished his cigar, he went forth.

"That was a fine piece of philanthropy," he thought, "on the part of Mr. Kestell. It's not often that attempts of this kind answer, however; but when one succeeds in raising a fellow-creature from the lowest state to one far superior, the reward must be great. Some day, I think I shall try the experiment. It's a modern craze, and it's the fashion to din the poor into one's ears. Now, if one had a specimen ready to show, one would have paid toll to fashionable philanthropy. Yes, some day I shall look out for this specimen."

At present, the thought of this future good deed quite satisfied Hoel; but it did not prevent him from having to overcome a certain mental and physical repugnance when 'Liza ushered him up the dark, airless, and not over-clean staircase of No. 21, Golden Sparrow Street.

Jesse Vicary rose hastily from his chair and pushed back a pile of books, with a bright smile on his face, as he accepted the proffered hand.

"This is kind of you, Mr. Fenner, very kind, to come all this way to see me. Will you sit down? I can provide a chair, though usually they are full of books."

Hoel had not intended to sit down. He had meant to say that he was looking in for a minute; but once again he was impressed by the mysterious power which Jesse exercised over those who came in contact with him. Hoel wondered why this man, who had come from the lowest rung of the ladder, should be so devoid of false shyness. Thinking to discover this riddle he accepted the chair.

"Don't turn out any books for me," said Hoel. "We of the Grub Street brotherhood feel as if we were on a desert island if we see no books."

Hoel tried not to be condescending; but he was conscious that he was trying, whilst his companion had the advantage over him of being perfectly natural.

"You wished for some extra work, you told me, Mr. Vicary, and it so happens

that we want Dr. Law's lecture—which comes off next Thursday evening at the Institute—reported rather more carefully than the newspaper reporter is accustomed to do it. I thought you might try your hand at it."

"It is very good of you to remember me. Thank you; I shall be delighted. I have improved lately, as a friend of mine lets me help him at the House occasionally; but I dare not do too much night work. This I can well manage. I am most grateful."

"Don't say anything about that; and, by the way" (always doubt a fact being unimportant when so prefaced), "don't credit me with a better memory than I possess, for I ought to tell you that I have lately been meeting some friends of yours."

"Of mine?" said Vicary, quickly. "I have so few in London."

"No, not in London, but at Rushbrook."

Jesse's bright smile was a pleasure to see; he admired Mr. Fenner, and this connecting link seemed to make him all at once his friend, if he might use such an expression even to himself about one so much above him.

"Then you saw Mr. Kestell and the young ladies. Did they mention my sister?"

"Yes, Miss Kestell, the eldest one, talked about her."

Vicary, who had been standing up, stooped down a moment to arrange some books; then, half-sitting on a low book-case, he said:

"You understand now, sir, why I want extra work. I have but one relation in the world, and I want to make a home for my sister Symee. I don't think it any shame for a woman to earn her bread in service; but it is hard upon any woman never to have known a home, nor parents, and to have no one to speak a familiar word to her. Symee has been all her life at Rushbrook; at least, when a child, she was at the farm-house close by, and I was away at school. Then, when she was thirteen, Mr. Kestell took her into his house. He has been very good to her, to both of us; we can never repay him; but, all the same, it will be the happiest day of my life when I can say: 'Symee, come home!' It does a man good to have such an object before him to urge him on; to have some one he loves above himself. Don't you think so, sir?"

It was a curious question to put to Hoel Fenner, because he was at present perfectly happy without this object. The self-denial which springs from love was to him an unknown force. It was only since he had seen Elva that the very faintest glimmer of light from that other world had pierced through his own peaceful atmosphere; but so faint was this glimmer that, being on the whole no hypocrite, he said, frankly:

"I have never had even a sister to work for, and I think I have been able to content myself."

Hoel's glance rested as he spoke on a good print of Saint Christopher. He rose up and went to it, noting that Memling was the artist, and that Strixner was the engraver.

"This is a good print. Does it belong to you, or to the house?"

"That is mine. My sister had it given to her by Miss Amice Kestell, and asked leave to hand it over to me. Symee knew I should like it, but not how much it would help me. That big strong giant, finding the burden of the Infant Christ almost more than he can do with, is a grand thought; and one sees he means to keep on till he has got to the other side. Then, though the rocks look cruel, there is the sun behind him, though he does not see it. I wonder sometimes why it is that we do not teach more with pictures. It is fortunate the Bible words are so plain, however, so that even our poorest, when they hear them, can make a picture for themselves in their own minds."

Jesse spoke quite naturally, as if he were merely speaking his thoughts out and expecting a sympathetic answer, so that Hoel was ashamed to show how little this kind of conversation was in his line.

"I doubt whether art would impress the masses very much, though that's rather the jargon of the time. Still, I believe that the clergy have in that direction a good deal increased their—what shall I call them?—stage properties."

Hoel could not mistake the expression of the intense feeling of disappointment in Vicary's face; he felt angry at having made a mistake; it would have been better simply to acquiesce. Before Hoel could retrieve his error, 'Liza's knuckles and shrill tones were both audible.

"If please, Mr. Vicary, there's a gentleman as wants to see you particular."

The gentleman evidently had not studied the rules of etiquette, for he followed 'Liza too closely to give Jesse a chance of asking

Mr. Fenner's leave. Hoel rose; but as the new-comer blocked up the doorway, and as he, Hoel, did not wish to leave Vicary with a bad impression of him, and was also curious about Vicary's friends, he remained where he was.

The new-comer was a tall, gaunt man, with deep-set eyes, very shabby garments, and long, thin hands. He brought with him into the room a reeking odour of stale tobacco and recent spirits, which Hoel thought most objectionable; but in spite of this the stranger interested him, or rather the unusual scene in which he was participating.

Jesse was as friendly and natural with this new visitor as he had been with the refined, literary Hoel; he brought a chair forward for the new-comer, who seemed almost too tall to be left standing.

"Mr. Fenner, this is my friend, Obed Diggings; he lived for some years at Grey-stone, and that seems to make us quite old friends. Now we are both obliged to live in London."

Hoel bowed graciously; he was getting over the smell of tobacco, and the surroundings were impressing themselves on his mental retina.

Obed Diggings turned towards Hoel and looked him over with a keen, piercing glance. It was not a glance of surprise, but of scrutiny; then apparently accepting him as Jesse's friend, and therefore his equal, he said:

"Very glad to make your acquaintance, sir." Obed sat down, and leant his long, thin arms on a pile of books. "I hope, sir, I'm not disturbing you and our friend Vicary. He sees me pretty often; eh, Jesse, my lad? But though I'm double his age, I don't mind owing to you, sir, that I come here for help. There's many besides me who does that, and they don't go away empty; there's always something here to fill the cask."

"Come, Mr. Diggings," laughed Jesse, "you forget we're not alone. Mr. Fenner won't be taken in by your fine words; he knows I'm only a clerk, and not a millionaire. All the help I can give you is contained in a nutshell. You see, sir, I'm a good listener, and Mr. Diggings is full of ideas."

Mr. Diggings did not join in the laugh, but he gravely tapped his forehead.

"Yes, there's a heap of ideas here, they come, and go, and tread on each other's heels, but in bad times they get starved, and cry out for food."

As he spoke, the strange visitor took from an outside pocket a bundle tied up in a red pocket-handkerchief.

"I've brought it for you to see, Jesse; you've got such a good, clear head, that I like you to give a word to my things. This time, however, I think it's perfect; the world will soon know the name of Obed Diggings. Look here, Jesse, and you, sir, too, please. Can anything be more neat and handy than this? Why, we shan't be able to make them fast enough. I think I shall take Louis into partnership, or pay him by piece-work."

Hoel Fenner could not repress a smile of amusement as he approached the table, and saw Obed undoing the knots of the handkerchief with feverish energy, and taking out with great care a wooden photograph frame made in the shape of a heart, with a support behind to make it to stand on a table.

Jesse, too, had a smile on his face as he silently stood by and said:

"That is the same you brought me before."

"Yes, my lad, it is; but I've perfected this invention. There's no mistaking it now—it's original work. You see the heart, and the photograph to go inside. It may be that of your sweetheart; and if so, what more appropriate than that she should be in your heart! The idea will take like wild-fire; but though this is ingenious, that's not the whole of my invention. Wait a minute."

Obed began fumbling again in his large pocket, whilst Jesse took up the frame and turned it round, to examine it, as he said to Hoel:

"Mr. Diggings wants to take out a patent for this, and I've been trying to dissuade him from doing it; but I'm not knowing about this sort of handiwork."

"Yes, that's it," continued Obed. "You're a kind fellow; but you don't quite understand. Now look here, this is the gem of the whole." He now produced a penny button-hole glass, to which he had attached a long wire. "This will make me a name. By this wire I shall fasten this glass, and then the whole will be first-rate: a heart for affection, a flower for remembrance. You see, Jesse, my lad, that the flower may be forget-me-not, or pansy, or what not. This patent will soon be in every shop-window; it will make our fortune—Milly's and mine."

"I'm afraid, as you've fixed it now, it will be a little top-heavy," said Jesse, kneeling

down and adjusting the glass. "Suppose we try putting it in the middle, there will be less chance of a misfortune to the patent—so; but wait a minute, the best plan will be for me to come and see you to-morrow after office work, and Milly and I can have a fixing-up consultation."

Obed Diggings took kindly to this suggestion, for evidently the unsympathetic attitude of the strange gentleman disturbed the flow of his ideas.

"Ah, well, yes; that would be best. I dare say you're busy to-night, Jesse. Thank you. I'll bring my specimen again. When we are rich, I'll not forget all you've done; nor more will Milly."

Jesse assisted at the packing-up, talking of ordinary matters to stop the flow of Obed's gratitude. Then, at last, with a bow, which was represented by a violent dip from his waist, Obed took his final leave.

Jesse watched him down the stairs, and when he returned to Mr. Fenner he had evidently forgotten his remark about the clergy, for his bright, eager look returned.

"You must forgive the old fellow, sir. He has seen better days, and he is not badly educated; besides, he's got a kind heart. You should see how tender he is to his poor crippled girl; but unfortunately he's got a terrible craze about inventions, instead of keeping to steady work. He learnt cabinet-making, and does still earn money in the trade; but what he earns one day he throws away the next on his ideas, and, sometimes, I'm afraid he takes to drink a little. It's best to humour him, it keeps him straighter. People live queer lives round here; but there's much kindness, and some hard heads in spite of poverty. The worst is, the men get hold of bad books, and they meet in some of their clubs and like to hear the sound of their own voices."

Hoel listened, and seemed suddenly to have plunged into an unknown depth of sea, the soundings of which he had never before taken. Even now the horrible odour of stale tobacco, left as a legacy by Obed, made him thankful that his present surroundings would not last long.

"But you, Vicary, you have read a good deal; you are—excuse me for saying it—a good deal above your neighbours. If I were in your place, I think I should lodge in more—well, a more congenial place."

Again Hoel felt that he was trying to avoid patronising his new acquaintance, and yet, how was he to help feeling superior

to a man who had been saved from the workhouse by the charity of a gentleman? "I like the place," answered Jesse, thoughtfully. "You see, even here, I have two fellow-creatures to whom I can speak of Rushbrook and Greystone; 'Liza, the girl, comes from off Mr. Eagle Ben-nison's estate, and Obed remembers climbing the great moors, which we call the Forest of Alder down there. I was down at the Home Farm, as a lad, and many a happy scramble I've had up to the five clumps. If I shut my eyes, I can see it all again, though I don't often talk about it; it brings on the 'mal du pays,' as the Swiss people say. I can't call it homesickness, never having had a home; but the longing for those downs seems almost worse. As to Golden Sparrow Street, it's not as bad as it looks to you, and, till Symee comes and lives with me, I prefer staying where I've got friends."

Hoel felt he must go now; so, after a few words more about the required work, he shook hands and walked quickly away. On his way home he experienced a feeling very unusual to him—that of having failed to make the right impression on his hearer. Usually, he knew he said and did exactly the right thing; but this was in society. Certainly, Jesse Vicary could not be said to come under that head, and Hoel was conscious of not having been in harmony with him, and yet, in spite of everything, he was still attracted.

"It's a pity, however, he has not escaped the religious cant of the middle class. I suppose there is something soothing in feeling better than one's neighbours, or talking more about it; we cultivated people have the same feelings, I dare say, but cover it up with a substantial overcoat; still, if he has the cant, he has it in its least objectionable form, for he is quite natural with it. Strange that Kestell of Greystone should have made himself responsible for twins. When I next go and see the Heatons I must ask Miss Kestell whether the Vicarys were quite common people; I have heard of Nature's gentleman, but never met it before. But by the time I do go to Rushbrook again, I shall have forgotten all about the subject. Besides, why should I go? If I do, I shall most likely not see her. Kestell never asked me to call. I should imagine he only patronises men with titles or fortunes; I've got neither, and should not be acceptable. Good heavens! what an idea. As if I wished to become acceptable!"

Hoel was fond of a certain kind of psychological studies, and smiled as he noted his own inconsistency; but when one has gone far enough in "the advancement of learning" oneself, it is interesting, but by no means exhilarating, to note the waywardness of one's own moral nature, and to find that knowledge does not necessarily guide actions.

Hoel said to himself that evening, when once again seated in his sanctum: "I will wash my hands of them all. When Vicary has finished this job, I shall have done my duty by him, and the connection will naturally come to an end. He is original and clever; but, after all, he can never rise above a certain level. A genius comes but seldom in a century; and, somehow, a London clerkship soon smothers even originality. It's a happy providence, so as to keep them well chained to their desks. No, I was rather rash in going to see him; I shall be more careful in the future."

But Hoel Fenner was somewhat too positive that evening, that he would not yield to circumstances; circumstance plays so large a part in all our lives, that it is better to acknowledge at once that we have to take it into consideration with all our reckonings of the future. Otherwise, when we strike against it, we may canon off into a direction the very opposite to the one intended.

WHITECHAPEL TO WIMBLEDON.

THE engine of a coming train, emerging from its underground track in a whirl of confused vapours, bears upon its front the legend: "Whitechapel and Wimbledon." What a parallel the words suggest! The crowded thoroughfares, the densely-packed courts and alleys, the grim spectres of want and crime, that are associated with the former, contrast sharply enough with decorous wealth in its suburban retreat; the shade, the broad thoroughfares, the well-hung carriages, the gay and well-cared-for children, with their ponies and dogs—these last better housed than the children of the slums. Yet the iron bond of the District Railway now unites the two places with half-hourly trains between them. And Jack the costermonger, weary with his vigils at the midnight markets of the Whitechapel Road, has fallen asleep over his empty baskets in the third-class carriage, and wakes not till he reaches the

pleasant shades of Wimbledon Park. The railway company will obligingly take him back to Charing Cross, where he ought to have alighted for Covent Garden; and he might be grateful, but is not, for the chance that has been given him of a sight of green country, and a breath of fresh, pure air. But we have had other passengers during the transit—flower-girls with baskets of roses, with market-bunches of mignonette and ferns, which they are deftly arranging into bouquets and “button-holes” on their way. There are workmen with their bags of tools; plumbers bound for suburban residences, where something is wrong with gas or water; errand-boys with big wallets and well-thumbed memorandum-books; women with mysterious bundles. For when the great rush of morning hours is over, all kinds of little eddies and currents of small traffic set in. And so the train burrows beneath the great City with all the roar and traffic of its streets but faintly realised, and by Charing Cross and Westminster in the dim underground daylight; and South Kensington appears, with its note of museums and its memories of exhibitions, vanished like the snows of long ago; and then we come into a broad ray of bright sunshine at Earl’s Court.

People, by the way, take Earl’s Court for granted; and not one in a hundred thousand who travels that way troubles him or herself to ask who was the Earl, and where his Court, that gave a name to this region of commodious flats and eligible family mansions. Yet were it not for houses, and smoke, and steam, and other obstructions, we might get a glimpse of the hill with its pleasant shades,

Thou hill whose brow the antique structures grace,
Rear’d by bold chiefs of Warwick’s noble race.

The antique structures being no other than Holland House, antique even in Addison’s days, when he lived there with his wife, the widowed Countess of Warwick, and still unaltered in its outward features. And the bold chiefs referred to by the poet were not of the famous old line, but descended from a Chancellor Rich, according to that amiable biographer, Lord Campbell, “a very consistent character in all that was base and profligate.” And the “chief,” who gave his name to the court, was Henry, the first Earl of Holland, whose descendants inherited the title of Warwick, while between this Henry, Lord of the Hill at Kensington, and Henrietta, Lady of the Hill at Wimbledon, there was

sufficient connection to make an excuse for thus lingering by the way.

Our train for Wimbledon has not afforded much time for this dissertation; but, taking a wide sweep, brings us round to Parson’s Green, still green and pleasant, with relics here and there of the comely red-brick houses of other days. And at the Green we take in a contingent of cricketers in white flannels, with long bags containing their cricketing apparatus. The “Green” is going to play the “Fields,” and there is quite a cheerful country note about this that reconciles one to the crowds of new houses that are springing up about old-fashioned Fulham, with its red roofs and grey church tower backed by the Bishop’s green and shaded groves. The old Pottery is there still, anyhow, with its rows of pots upon the parapets. And the river, bank high, throws a bright gleam upon us; we catch a passing glimpse through a bewildering network of girders of new Putney Bridge, with its handsome granite arches. Then we have a new Putney, which differs not much in longitude from old Putney, but which discloses a new town with rows of streets and shops that promise to join hands with Wandsworth ere long, and then we are among green fields and suburban country, as we reach a station called Southfields, where our cricketers alight, received with hospitable shouts by their rivals.

So far all has been foreseen and familiar; but now the romance of the journey begins. It ends quickly, too. But there it is for the moment, a fragment of charming landscape, rich with all the associations of a chequered history.

The scene we behold from the windows of our underground railway-carriage is altogether a surprise, a lovely rural prospect, shut in with woods, and full of a quiet charm and dignity, with the repose and peace of a long-secluded ancestral domain.

In the foreground is a happy little lake, which shines like molten silver, and reflects the verdure, the trees, the azure of the skies. In the midst floats a swan, pure white. There is an old boat-house, and a skiff is moored by the shore. Above, with a sweep of green glade and tufted bank, rises a hill crowned with hanging woods, and a church spire rises from among the trees.

And this is Wimbledon Park, an undiscovered region to most Londoners; once a Royal seat, and now parcelled out in

lots for building. New roads are to be seen here and there, "before they are made," and rows of houses, perhaps of shops also, will, in the course of time, shut out this beautiful prospect from the traveller from Whitechapel. All is not rural calm here even now. Further on, we get a glimpse of the valley of the Wandle, with a suspicion of factory chimneys and a view of long lines of dwellings stretching out into a smoky haze. But again the country closes in upon us, and, at Wimbledon Park Station, a perfect stillness seems to reign.

At the very door of the station we strike into a rough path that leads up to the side of a hill. Two comely sunburnt dames are toiling up the slope, with little flax-haired children clinging to their skirts, and, at the top of the hill, is a wild little copse, where birds are twittering and children are scattered about busily gathering blackberries. Beyond the wood a newly-formed road leads along the crest of the hill, with a fine stretch of country spread out to view all round.

The Crystal Palace sparkles yonder in the sunshine, with the heights of Norwood darkened in the shadow of a cloud. There are Banstead Downs all in dreamy outline, and dim suggestions of more distant hills, with woods and pastures lying below. And so the prospect stretches out from Epsom away to Kingston. Yet we are still in Wimbledon Park. There were twelve hundred acres of it altogether, and we may wander for long distances without quitting its limits. Here and there we may come upon a noble oak that a Cecil, perhaps, dropped the original acorn of, gathered, mayhap, from one of those noble trees of Hatfield which, in Elizabeth's time, were in the height of their glory. And close by the noble oak you may find a board announcing building land for sale, with a suggestion of its adaptability for shop frontages. And, in a field beyond, the ploughman with his team is driving a furrow, where the plough-share glitters in the moist, clinging soil. There might be pheasants, you would think, in yonder copse, and the lay of the country suggests a fox stealing away beyond and bounds feathering among the bracken. And in the midst of it all appears the white steam of a train, and the underground train from Whitechapel steals past in the quiet, undemonstrative way it has acquired among the London streets.

As for this Wimbledon Park, which, if it has

lost its seclusion, has anyhow become accessible to all the world, its history is mainly that of the Manor which formerly went with it. And that was from time immemorial the property of the Church of Canterbury, although some of its ancient customs seem to point to a time when its tenants may have "followed to the field some warlike lord." For there was a heriot at the death of a tenant, when his heirs must deliver up his best horse, saddle, bridle, spear, sword, boots, spurs, and armour. And those were not articles that an Archbishop should have coveted. Then, the fine that was paid by the heir for every fifteen acres was "one blacke sheepe or tenpence in money," and the black sheep has a very heathenish look about it. The custom, too, of Borough English prevailed in the Manor, that is to say, the youngest was heir instead of the eldest; and all these things have a pleasant archaic flavour about them, and go to show that our Wimbledon was settled by a different race and had different manners from the surrounding population.

But, except for these curious customs, there was little noteworthy in the history of Wimbledon during the tranquil rule of the ecclesiastics. When Cranmer transferred it to Henry the Eighth, in exchange for other lands, Wimbledon began to be noteworthy. Henry gave it to Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Wolsey's former protégé, who was a native of neighbouring Patney, and the son of a blacksmith, or, more probably, of an iron-master there; the Cromwells having, at that time, been persons of means and consideration in the neighbourhood. When Cromwell lost his estates and head, the manor reverted to the Crown, and was granted to Queen Catherine Parr for life. That life was not a long one, and, at Catherine's death, Queen Mary bestowed the estate on Cardinal Pole, who only survived his Royal kinswoman a few days. Then Queen Elizabeth had it, and sold the Manor House and Park to my Lord Keeper Hatton, one of the salient figures of that brilliant period. But Sir Christopher, having bought and built too largely, was obliged to part with Wimbledon Park to Sir Thomas Cecil, the eldest son of Lord Burleigh, of the sagacious nod, and afterwards Earl of Exeter. And in the old Manor House Cecil entertained Queen Elizabeth, who passed through on her way to Nonsuch Palace, near Ewell, when the churchwardens of Wimbledon expended twentypence on mending the wayes between the two places. The Earl

of Exeter left the place to his third son, Edward Cecil, a soldier for many years in the wars in the Low Countries, who was rewarded for his not over brilliant services by the titles of Baron Putney and Viscount Wimbledon. He had the family talent for building and construction. Wimbledon House, in the Strand, was his, close to the mansion of his brother of Exeter, the fame of which is preserved in Exeter Hall, and opposite the house of his cousin of Salisbury, where are now Cecil and Salisbury Street. But Wimbledon House was destroyed by fire in its builder's lifetime, and seems to have left no trace.

Lord Wimbledon built a magnificent house on the site of his country manor—a house which resembled Hatfield in its general plan, but which was more fantastic and less dignified in general appearance. But many thought it a finer house than Nonsuch. Anyhow, it stood in a noble situation—perhaps the finest anywhere near London—approached by monumental flights of steps, in contrast with which the great gilt coaches, with their six horses apiece, which drew up before them, seemed like toy chariots drawn by mice.

But his lordship, dying, left daughters only, and the honours of Putney and Wimbledon became extinct. And the daughters, in 1639, sold the whole estate to Henry, Earl of Holland, and others, as trustees for Queen Henrietta Maria. The sum paid for Manor and estate was sixteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine pounds. The amount may be compared with the eighty-five thousand pounds given for the Park, without the Manor, in 1846. Yet, looking at the greater worth of money in the earlier period, the increase in value is less than one might expect. From that time Wimbledon Hall, as it was generally called, became a favourite resting-place with Henrietta and King Charles.

Everything about the house seems to have been kept in the most perfect order, under the Queen's own eye. The gardens were extensive, and beautifully kept, adorned with knots and flower-beds of quaint and curious devices; rich in all kinds of trees and shrubs; prolific in both fruit and flowers. There was a fine orangery, a maze, a wilderness, a vineyard, a fine banqueting-house in the garden, with great doors that, thrown open, revealed the whole pleasant prospect of artificial and natural beauties.

Within the house were fine galleries;

noble saloons, panelled with oak or cedar; halls with marble pavements; fine chimney-pieces; everywhere gilding and carving; rich furniture, and hangings of Gobelins, and other tapestry; a music-room, with organs; noble staircases terminated in lofty turrets, from which could be seen a magnificent prospect all round—the towers of Westminster and Whitehall; great reaches of the silvery Thames; the hills of Kent and Surrey; Kensington, with its groves and gardens; and all the northern heights of London.

In this stately pleasure-house, the Queen was entirely at home. It was her house to herself, and Charles was there only as a guest. Among the handsome and splendidly-attired gentlemen, whom the Queen loved to have about her, one of the Queen's chief favourites was her treasurer and High Steward, Henry, Earl of Holland, the owner of that famous house at Kensington, which still bears his name. When the troubles of the Civil Wars came on, Lord Holland played a vacillating part. Now he was for the Parliament; now for the King; and was mistrusted and suspected on either hand. But when the King's cause was lost, and he a captive in the hands of his enemies, and the Queen an exile at the Court of France, vainly striving to move the crafty Mazarin to interfere, Lord Holland was appealed to as one who had been once the most favoured, trusted servant of the Queen. A scheme was on foot to deliver the King. The gentry of the southern counties were ready to rise in arms; encouraging accounts came in from all parts of the country. Lord Holland assumed the direction of the plan, and the secret threads of the conspiracy were drawn together at Wimbledon. There the Queen had still devoted servants, too humble, perhaps, to be suspected. These were French gardeners, who kept up a connection with their native country. The King was allowed to send orders as to the arrangements of the garden; and doubtless these missives had a secret meaning.

The rising broke out prematurely in Kent. Fairfax stormed Maidstone and drove the Royalists to cross the river into Essex, where they took possession of Colchester. Lord Holland mustered a thousand horsemen on Wimbledon Heath, with the Duke of Buckingham and other young nobles as his officers. But Cromwell's seasoned troopers were soon upon them. The Royalist cavalry were dispersed, and the last of them overtaken and captured

at St. Neots, in Huntingdonshire, Lord Holland among the number. And a few months after the execution of the King, Lord Holland met his fate manfully enough, in white satin doublet and cap with silver lace, on the scaffold, in Palace Yard.

With this tragedy comes decadence upon Wimbledon Hall. Commissioners descended upon the place and surveyed it for sale; but even the stern Puritans seemed touched with its grace and beauty: "The site very pleasant; the rooms richly adorned, very commodious and fit for present use; the ayre sweet and open; the church and market near."

Presently the whole was sold, and shortly after General Lambert entered into possession. He, too, was a man of taste and refinement, with ambition that would make a palace of his new dwelling. But his star paled before that of Cromwell, and he consoled himself with the beautiful gardens, about which the memory of the Queen still lingered. He cultivated tulips and gillyflowers, anticipating more modern crazes. He was a skilful flower painter, too, and adorned the house with his canvases.

Then came the Restoration, and Henrietta was once more in possession of her old pleasure-house. But what restoration was there for one faded, worn, and weary with intrigues and disappointments? The place, with its memories, was almost hateful to her now, and she sold it to the Earl of Bristol.

After the Earl's death, Osborne, afterwards Duke of Leeds, bought the place, and his executors sold it to one Sir Theodore Janssen, a South Sea director. The man of wealth pulled down the mansion that Cecil had built and Queen Henrietta adorned, and began to build a new one. Then, in 1720, the bubble burst, and all the ruined gamblers fastened upon those who still had money, and the estates of the directors were confiscated by Act of Parliament.

Sarah of Marlborough bought the estate, and scattered to the four winds Janssen's plans and foundations. She built a house on the north side of the knoll, did not like it, and pulled it down. Built another on the south side; did not like that either, but let it stand; and finally bequeathed the whole estate to John Spencer, her grandson, whose descendants were ennobled as Earls Spencer. But Sarah's house was burnt down in 1785, and the site stood vacant till 1798, when

the present existing house was built—an affair of no great architectural pretensions. In 1846 the Spencers sold the Park and Hall, but retained the Manor, of which Earl Spencer is still the lord.

Since then, Wimbledon Park has been gradually converted into building lots; but as this process has gone on gradually, and the new houses lie pretty well hidden by foliage in their own grounds, many of the most pleasing features of the old Park are still retained.

Where the Park ends the Common begins—that breezy common, still wild and unconventional, with thickets and dells, and wildernesses of bracken, while, from its broken edge, a sweet woodland prospect opens out. There is a fine stretch of heath all the way from Putney, and in the Bottom, where was once the "Bald-faced Stag"—now nursery ground—stood the gibbet, where once dangled the bones of the famous Jerry Abershaw, the terror of travellers along the well-worn Kingston Road. And then we have the old windmill, still retained as a picturesque accessory, although relieved from active service; and close by is the tall flagstaff which serves as a reminder of the volunteer camp, and of the cottage lately its headquarters. The butts, too, have a solemn and gloomy aspect in the distance, as if they were so many entrenchments of the giants of old. It is this Putney side of the heath that was once a favourite scene for duels. Here the Duke of York met Colonel Lennox in 1789. The Duke had grossly insulted the Colonel on the Guards' parade, and refused to retract, but intimated that he waived his immunities as Royal Prince and commanding officer. The stout Duke, in his brown coat, received the fire of Colonel Lennox, but would not return it. The Colonel might blaze away at him if he pleased, but the Duke would not throw away a word or a bullet upon him. And when the Colonel declined to make a target of his Royal antagonist, the Duke marched contemptuously away. The Colonel lived to be Duke of Richmond, and died at last, when Governor-General of Canada, of the bite of a little pet dog.

Then Pitt and Tierney fought a duel here, close to where then stood Jerry Abershaw's gibbet. It was fought on a Sunday, too, a fact which shocked the proprieties of the time. Then, in 1807, Sir Francis Burdett met John Paull, when both were slightly wounded. Still more noted was the duel between Castle-

reagh and Canning, who fought out a Cabinet quarrel on the heath near Putney, when Canning received a trifling wound. More desperate was the encounter between George Payne and Mr. Clarke in 1810, the latter avenging his sister's honour, and lodging a bullet in the body of her seducer, of which wound unhappy Mr. Payne died two days after at the "Red Lion" Inn.

In aristocratic England to kill one's friend in a duel had always been regarded as an exclusive caste privilege; and when tradespeople affected to have notions of honour, it was felt that it was time for gentlemen to abstain from an unfashionable practice. And thus the duel of Elliot and Mirfin, the latter a draper, fought on Wimbledon Heath in 1838, did much to bring duelling into disrepute. Yet, in the following year, an old-fashioned duel was fought between the Marquis of Londonderry and Henry Grattan; and in 1840 a distinguished exile, Louis Napoléon, with Count D'Orsay as his second, appeared upon the ground to meet Count Léon in mortal combat. But some one had sent for the police. The duel was stopped, and the intending combatants bound over to keep the peace. The last serious duel fought upon this classic spot was between the Earl of Cardigan and Captain Harvey Tuckett, arising out of the former's overbearing tyranny as commanding officer of the Eleventh Hussars. The Captain was seriously wounded, and Lord Cardigan was put on his trial, but escaped by a flaw in the indictment, and was warmly congratulated thereupon by Lord Denman, the presiding Judge.

And now, to leave the scene of these single combats, and to seek the relics of ancient warfare, we must make our way to "Cæsar's Camp," not very easy to be found by a casual pedestrian. First of all, in an ordinary way, Wimbledon Common is a rather lonely spot. You may descry in the distance a party of golf-players with their clubs and irons and attendant caddies. But they are soon out of sight in pursuit of the little white balls. And a pair of lovers, on horseback, clearly are unapproachable. An elderly gentleman, calmly reading in the midst of solitude, whose newspaper has shone as a bright spot in the dun-coloured heath, has heard of Cæsar's Camp, and vaguely declares it is "somewhere over there." A workman, passing across the scene, pauses to reply: "Cæsar's Camp—Camp? Bless you, that's

all over now!" A veteran, smoking his pipe in a hollow, has no knowledge of Cæsar's Camp; but there is Cæsar's Well right over yonder; and the well is not far from the Camp, as the big ordnance plan, previously consulted, has shown. A little girl, in charge of a still smaller infant, proves the most intelligent guide. "The well's right behind the Queen's butt;" and that is a sufficiently good landmark, being the biggest and most massive of all those respectable earthworks.

And, indeed, the well is a place of general resort, and attracts little knots of pilgrims from all sides, who picnic in the little thicket about it, and quench their thirst in the pellucid well. It is a spring bright, and clear, and strong, and supplies a little burn that runs along the dell. There is no brighter, sunnier spot anywhere than this dell, and, looked at from below, it appears as a horseshoe-shaped hollow, with a regular, defined edge, that probably represents the defensive bank of earth that once surrounded it. It is the very place for the refuge of a pastoral tribe, with a copious spring at the head of it, defended by woods and morasses, and answering exactly, as it seems, to Cæsar's description of the "capital town of Casivellaunus." Here ran the little burn between the booths and huts of the Britons; and here, perhaps, may Cæsar have rested after the fight, weary and thirsty with the toil of the day, while some eager soldier brought him a cup of water from the crystal spring.

It is certainly curious that while, by common consent, the name of Cæsar is applied to the well, yet that it is not locally known in connection with the fine circular entrenchment that lies some little distance to the westward of the well. For that people call the Rounds, a name appropriate enough, as it consists of two great concentric banks of earth, with a hollow way between. If intended for a defensive camp, it is difficult to see the purpose of the outer rampart, which, unprotected by any ditch, seems rather an advantage than an obstacle to an assailant. But it may not have been a camp at all, but a temple, a place of sacrifice, and of assemblage too. Whatever its object may have been, the site of the entrenchment is a fine one. It seems to be the most commanding point in the neighbourhood, and from its ramparts a fine and extensive view is to be had of the country round about, with towns and villages scattered about, and common,

heaths, and woods, and rough, wild hills that stretch to the far horizon. The interior of the camp is rough, broken ground, with thorn-bushes growing here and there. The plough has been at work upon it, and the symmetry of its contour has vanished. Vanished, too, has the fine circle of trees, that gave a grateful shade, and added grace and dignity to the scene. Their stumps only remain as a memorial of those who perpetrated the deed of destruction.

Happily, the old entrenchment has characteristics quite opposite to those of Avernus. That is, it is difficult to get there, but very easy to find the way back again. Indeed, the track seems a well-frequented one, a pleasant way under an avenue of young trees, past a little outlying settlement, called West Place, where there is a great show of washing and hanging out to dry, and so directly into the High Street of Wimbledon, which one would like to think is only a younger descendant of that Wibbandun about which the men of Kent and the West Saxons fought so fiercely lang syne.

But old Wimbledon is almost swallowed up in new buildings and streets, and has quite the air of Regent Street, with handsome shops, and great displays in their windows. Yet old Wimbledon House seems still to be standing in its fine timbered grounds, where Monsieur de Calonne once lived, and the Prince de Condé after him, exiled from Chantilly. Here, too, Marryat, the novelist, was reared; and we may suppose that Mr. Midshipman Easy once hailed from this pleasant Surrey village. And happily the way is all down hill, and brings us swiftly to the station, where the signal lights are gleaming against the soft evening sky, and a train is waiting to depart, bearing the label—Whitechapel!

AT PEEL.

GATHER it up from the jagged rocks that fringe the ancient keep,
The thing, but yesterday a man, now a toy for the angry deep;
Tossed from Atlantic rollers, to the rush of the Irish waves,
Drifting by Mona's frowning coasts to the haven of her caves.

Gather him up. The dumb, dead lips will speak to us never more;
The wide blue eyes no longer scan the signs of sea and shore;
The strong young hands hang listlessly among the seaweeds brown.
Gather him up, and bear him slow, through the quaint old fishing town.

Did he come from a hut 'mid green Erin's hills, or
a cot among Highland snows,
Or a homestead high on the Yorkshire coast, where
the wild nor'easter blows,
Or do they mourn by a Norway fiord for the sailor
who went away,
To lie, all nameless and unowned, 'mid the rocks of
Peel to-day?

There are none to tell; and we who love the sweet,
sad seaboard know
Such death and doom come oft enough, as the long
years come and go.
Carry him—somebody's darling—with fitting care
and rite
To his rest on St. Patrick's Island—to his rest 'mid
its ruined night.

Make his grave in the turf, which centuries have
woven so soft and green,
Where the ruddy arches still are left, though the
sunbeams glint between;
Where, fourteen hundred years ago, the great Saint's
footsteps trod
When, to the wild Manx islanders, he brought the
Word of God.

Will the nameless fishermen's spirits come on some
soft midnight hour,
On the Holy Eve when, legend says, souls have
such mystic power,
And with Saints, and Bishops, and Warriors stern,
and Scandinavian Kings,
See all the wonderful change and chance that passes
o'er earthly things?

Musing, where still St. Germain's Church rules his
Cathedral Isle,
Where the "Northern Wizard's" spell endures the
world he made to style;
While the sea-birds swoop, and the brown sails flit
over the clear blue wave,
One thinks, "Had ever the wandering Dead so fair
or so strange a grave?"

TWO DAYS IN CANTON.

FIRST DAY.

THE Island of Hongkong is lying far behind us. We left, at eight o'clock this morning, its lovely harbour, with the straggling town of Victoria, sweltering in the heat, shut out from the sea-breeze by the towering wall of rock that, rising abruptly, culminates in the Peak two thousand feet above. We have threaded the dangerous channels through the countless islands in the mouth of the Pearl River, and are now steaming swiftly up the stream, in the good ship "Hankow"—every dip of the ponderous walking-beam overhead sending us farther and farther into the interior of this mysterious land of China.

We have passed the famous Bogue Forts—raised by German engineers to close the passage—and we wondered if these engineers had an eye to future possibilities, a time when the black eagle flag might have to be carried up the river as the banner of an enemy. Admirably placed, mounting many heavy guns, the Forts dominate the whole of the deep channel;

but, while the larger door for the cat is closed, the small door for the kitten is left open, and it would appear perfectly easy for small, swift launches and torpedo-boats to sneak in safely round the flanks and land men and machine-guns on the commanding heights beyond, against fire from which there appears to be no protection.

In two places on our passage we passed through the rows of piles by which the river was closed in the late French war. Sufficient openings have been made for the daylight passage of ships; but night work is difficult and dangerous with the strong tideway and the inferior lighting of the barriers.

Next in sight appeared our first pagoda—dream of our childhood! Oh! how the glass shades of many a bygone lodging came back to memory, each with its delicate ivory carving, rising tier on tier, not forgetting the bells at the corners, nor the card at the bottom requesting us not to touch! This last admonition is faithfully observed by the Chinese themselves. All but one of those we saw were neglected and falling to decay. One cause of decay was curious; when first the Whampoa Pagoda came in sight our glasses were busy examining it, and an appearance at the top puzzled us completely; after many a futile guess, we found, on near approach, a very large tree growing on the far side of the pagoda, its roots embedded in the masonry a hundred and forty feet from the ground. Every roof, in every pagoda we saw that day, had its trees and bushes, some large, some small; but all originally springing from seeds brought by birds. The particular tree noticed above must have had a trunk some eighteen inches thick.

The river at Whampoa divides into many channels, forming islands from ten to fifty acres in extent, and flat as a billiard-table. The soil is only a few inches higher than the surface of the stream at high water, and every square inch is under cultivation. Rice, rice, rice, wherever the eye can rest.

Life on the river now becomes busy; boats, large and small, of every shape and, apparently, in every stage of decay, ply up and down, across and across the stream, now struggling to secure good luck by crossing our bows, now appearing to sink bodily under the swell raised by our passage. The spectator feels a vague sense of pity for some of these boats, so overladen are they; however, their owners know their

capabilities, and do not seem to mind a little more or less water coming in over the gunwales, which, in many cases, are seemingly flush with the river; indeed, in several boats we saw the crew baling water, not out of, but into, their crazy craft. A curious method of propulsion now appeared. A long, low barge, crammed and packed with passengers, was driven by a rude stern paddle-wheel, worked by long levers, on which three rows of four men each kept up a rhythmical tread, and a very fair speed resulted. It was a fine instance of economising space, for, with the number of passengers carried, there would be no room for oars.

We now passed the busy little town of Whampoa, with steamers and many sailing ships lying off, most of the vessels flying the English ensign, though Germany was represented by a smart little man-of-war, looking so bright and trim among the workaday craft around. The Chinese have a Naval depot and Torpedo-yard here, and very much in earnest looked the ten or twelve torpedo-boats lying at anchor, each floating the curious pointed Imperial flag—yellow, with a dragon device in black. The Torpedo School is under German officers at present; but the time is quickly coming when China will be satisfied with her own powers in naval and military matters, and will dismiss her schoolmasters; just as Japan is now building and running her own railways, on American ideas, learnt from her now-dismissed instructors.

At last, in the distance ahead, looms up a big and familiar-looking building. Canton is in sight. Canton, the Chinese southern capital, with a population variously estimated at from one to four millions of people, Chinese among other Chinese towns, the home of Conservatism, where the first words the children learn to lisp are "Foreign Devil," and where the foreigner is despised as a barbarian; and yet the first building visible, the only one, in fact, except a far-away pagoda, is the Roman Catholic Cathedral. It is not built away among the foreign houses in the little English settlement, cut off from the rest of the town, but away in the heart of the busy city itself—miles from a friendly house—standing like a missionary alone in a heathen crowd.

If there were boats at Whampoa, what shall we say to the state of the river at Canton? That it is as crowded as Cannon Street? as London Bridge? More so;

for while the channel itself is covered with passing craft, the banks are lined with rank upon rank, row upon row, literally street upon street of boats which are the home of their crews. An anxious time must be daily passed by the captain of this huge river-ship, as he threads his way through the crowd. To-day, as we approach the wharf, a strong tide is running up, and many a narrow escape is recorded as, urged by strong language, almost as much as by her paddles, the ship surges near enough for the shore-lines to be thrown, and we are warped slowly to the resting-place.

The river folk are taciturn; but on shore the Oriental love of jabber holds its own, as noise enough to deafen one arises from our seven hundred Chinese passengers—till now cooped on the lower deck—as they emerge and are greeted by a similar crowd beyond the barrier. At a European port, this crowd would be one of idlers drawn by curiosity; but idlers are unknown here. The Chinaman is a busy man through all the daylight hours for seven days a week. From dawn to dark his work goes on; his very children—who become bread-winners before they can fairly talk—use their father's implements as playthings, and where our bairns would play at keeping shop, the baby Chinaman, with block of wood and heavy chopper, goes through the motions of splitting firewood. One day he will make a splinter, and from that day forth becomes a worker. This business of splitting firewood is the daily task of at least one member of a family, in a town where no coal is burnt; and when baby can begin to chop, big brother will help his father at his trade.

No, the crowd beyond the barrier are on business, each eager to set to work with his partner just arrived, and grudging the time before they can discuss it. And now through the crowd comes quietly a privileged man, with something of a Western look upon his Oriental features. He is the guide, Ah Cum, who, for many years, has daily met the boat to take the foreign visitors round the town. His English is curious, but fluent, picked up in this manner from many a globe explorer; and, in the midst of a solemn description of god or temple, a quaint Americanism or bit of English slang will be used with an earnestness that is touching. After arranging to return to the ship for dinner and the night—for she will stay over the next day, Sunday—we confide our destinies to Ah

Cum, and enter the capital of the Kwang-Tung.

Pushing through the swarming crowd we enter sedan-chairs, and, borne by shrieking coolies, plunge into the town. Is this a street, or a chink that leads to one? Barely five feet wide, the open venetians of the upper storey touching, the sky above hidden by make-shift awnings of boards, cloths, mats, paper, anything that will cast a shade—dark as Erebus—surely it is a chink. We turn to the right with difficulty, as the long chairs require skilful manoeuvring round the corner. Again a chink, we turn again; again a chink; and we realise that the streets we had heard called narrow are very narrow indeed. In no instance did we find a street ten feet wide, and most were far less; and each filled with a yelling, jostling crowd of busy men. As in London city, in business hours, women were conspicuous by their absence. Children, several; women, one or two; men, in millions we appeared to meet.

We now turn into a clearer, brighter, but no wider street, where the shops betoken a richer quarter, and we examine it curiously. The awnings overhead are now chiefly mats and canvas. There is no attempt at fit or uniformity, each householder providing his own at his own sweet will. Below these hang the clothing and family linen of those living above the shops. Perhaps the air is purer in the street, and they are hung to ventilate; then, alas for the air in the house!

The houses are but a single storey high, so the clothes hang pretty low; but below these again hang the gaily-coloured signs of the shopmen: boards some eight inches wide and ten feet long—scarlet, green, umber, sienna—every colour is there except blue, the red predominating. These boards, which hang by one end about a foot from the houses, bear each a perpendicular row of large Chinese characters, carved or painted, and, while adding local colour, they narrow the perspective of the street. The pavement is of granite blocks, stretched across from house to house, and slightly arched in the centre. Drainage there is none; what liquid is thrown from the shops or the rooms above evaporates in the stifling heat, and nothing but the smell remains. And the smell, what does that matter? Would introducing a pink into an acre of roses affect the nostrils? Everything in every place in Canton smells, and smells vilely; and yet so great is the

variety that none remains long enough to annoy, unless you stand still.

Lighting cigars to add another and pleasanter scent to help us while we wait, let us look at the shops like veritable country cousins. We dutifully begin, when Ah Cum dismounts with a twinkle in his eye.

"You know what that is?" he chuckles, pointing to a frying, frizzling mess in an open pan, apparently cooking by the heat of the sun, but really heated by a round furnace built into the counter. We simmer vaguely, but see nothing unusual. "That cat," he goes on with a broad smile.

Hanging round the shop front are the trussed bodies of other cats; and very funny they look: the white, naked bodies decked, like the poulterer's pheasants at home, each with its furry tail—tabby, tortoiseshell, or black, to say that here the veritable cat, and not the inferior rabbit is for sale. For all that, very few cats are eaten, and this shop is shown as a curiosity, though here and there through the town we catch a glimpse of furry tails, or, more commonly, hairy ones, where the dog is being made useful after death.

Next door, we have a shop for the sale of rice-paper drawings. Division of labour here comes into play, and we see that the delicate pictures are not each the loving work of an artist, as we had supposed, but copies made against time. A finished picture is taken, five or six transparent sheets laid over and quickly traced in fine pencil, and passed on by the tracer, one to the boy with scarlet, another to the boy with blue, and so on; the head only being left to be painted by the solemn, round-spectacled old gentleman in the corner, whose moustache betrays the fact that he is a grandfather. We buy a set of a dozen scenes in prison for about half-a-crown, and pass on.

"See that blue," says Ah Cum, as we enter another shop, pointing to a dull blue of curious tint, being inserted as enamel into delicate, gold filagree jewellery. "Know what that is?" Of course we don't know; and Ah Cum proceeds to explain by pulling open a drawer, as if the place belonged to him, and producing a handful of feathers. "That kingfisher feather." The boy in the corner is cutting the feathers into shreds, each little heap representing a different tint, while the workman takes these little bits and fixes them with gum. The work is tawdry, and like inferior enamel; but for the curiosity

we select some small pieces, and move on.

How the people seem to enjoy themselves in those shops that are not work-shops! Look at that fat old fellow in the boot-store, with the fat-soled slippers round him. Leaning back, with his stool at an angle of forty-five degrees, his round shoulders quivering like a jelly against the wall, he is laughing and chatting with a friend, who talks from the street. Naked to the waist, and fanning his paunchy form, he looks the picture of content. Why! the next man is like him; so is the next; so is the next. They are all shoemakers, it being "China custom" for trades to cluster in this fashion. Evidently, shoes are fattening. No, there's a jeweller just as fat and jolly. Sell? They don't care! Give their terms? "All litee, Chin-Chin." Refuse their terms? "All litee—maskee, Chin-Chin." Take it or leave it, we're quite happy, they seem to say. And yet, if he wants to deal, it would be hard to find an acuter bargainer.

The next shop we stare at in our well-bred way is a barber's. China must be the paradise of hairdressers, for at least once a day each respectable man must have his head shaved. Look at that fellow now, leaning over the brass basin on the peculiar green and scarlet stand, of a form that all these barbers affect. He has had his queue unplaited, and washed, and now the barber is combing it out. Glossy, black, rather coarse, but long and abundant—it must be five feet long, at least. Now it is plaited, and the coiffure is complete. First, the forehead has been shaved to a line just behind the ears; the neck has been shaved to the swell of the head; and then the remaining hair has been plaited in three strands, resulting in a so-called "pig-tail"—or, as a Chinaman expresses it, a tress—as thick as your wrist where it leaves the head, tapering to nothing, and finished off with a tassel of black-silk ribbons, that reach within a few inches of the ground. He is very proud of his tail, is your Chinaman, and to touch it is to insult him, badge of servitude though it is, forced upon his ancestors two hundred years ago by their Manchu conquerors. We shall find by-and-by the pig-tail put to a use its wearer hardly bargained for—but that must come at its proper time.

Ah Cum now thinks we have seen enough shops, and we are by no means sorry to escape the crowd that has gathered. The crowd do not look much at us, but take

the most vivid interest in things we look at. We stop to inspect one of the ordinary sign-boards. It probably says that "Hing Loong has for sale tables, chairs, and all kinds of wooden things;" but from the grave and reverential way in which every busy man passing stops and reads it over and over again, merely because we look at it, it might be a heavenly message flashed out for the comfort of this celestial people. We take our chairs, our bearers again shrieking and yelling as they jostle through the throng; and as we pass we notice that the shops, all open to the street, and innocent of door or window, change their character, and making, rather than selling, is the business of the street. Here, on the left, is a weaver's loom. It is primitive, but by no means simple. One man sits below, throwing the shuttle and working the warp thread with enormous pedals; overhead another man, playing, it would seem, an elaborate harp formed of delicate silk strings, catching unerringly the threads which form the pattern, the whole affair grating and groaning, but every movement in exact time like so much clock-work.

Here, on the right, is a jade-working shed, where the valuable stone, almost priceless when in large lumps of good colour, is cut and polished by half-naked boys in a room a not-fastidious dog would avoid. We ask the price of a small cylinder, the size of a silk-reel, hear that it is forty dollars, and pass on. We stop at a low, dirty-looking room, hung with filthy clothes, where three coolies are playing their eternal game of "how many fingers do I hold up" for drinks round, and are told that there the best ivory-carving in Canton is produced. A cadaverous-looking man in the corner is pulled awake by Ah Cum, and unlocking a crazy door in an antediluvian press, just visible through its dust, produces some of those delicately-carved card-cases, and such like things, which these men produce with the most unpromising tools. Bits of sharpened wire and patience are the ivory-carver's stock in trade. We look at some of those marvels of patient work, the hollow concentric balls—the one now in hand has thirteen, one inside the other—and pass on, for Ah Cum is impatient to show us the next thing on his programme, The Temple of Five Hundred Deities.

We have been warned not to expect architectural beauties in Canton; and lo! a common, barn-like building, with a

common, barn-like door, flanked by two dilapidated Buddhist idols, is unlocked by an old crone who keeps poultry in the recess where stand the idols, and we are ushered directly into the temple. It is for all the world like a temporary museum; a long, central room, with others crossing it at right angles, low, dirty, lighted from above by a continuous cobweb-covered skylight; no altar, no place for worshippers, it is simply a disreputable barn, in which are stored the five hundred and three figures which deserve a fitter habitation. All the figures in this Chinese temple are different in action, aspect, and meaning. There they sit, row upon row, life-sized, natural, a solemn silence round. Before each is smouldering incense, sending fragrant smoke into the air. We speak in hushed whispers together. Ah Cum, who has been bowing reverently before his own particular "joss," steals back, and with an air of reverence, whispers: "Bally fine, ain't it?" He meant well; but it was incongruous, and we laughed.

Examined in detail, the figures are more interesting and less solemn. Here is a fat, cheery old soul, with five chubby children in his lap; his big toe is worn away by the kisses of matrons wishing a similar family. There is a wrinkled ascetic with an arm ten feet long, up-stretched to commemorate the action of Kwa Ping-To, as he held the moon in the heavens in her hour of danger. Here is a portrait-model of Marco Polo, said to have been carved at the date of his sojourn in China. It is pitiable to see these beautifully-carved figures, some full of grace or dignity, covered an inch thick in dust, and looked at only by careless tourists. We leave the place rather subdued, and work our way back to the ship.

A capital dinner, followed by an astronomical chat with genial Captain Lloyd, who is interested in watching the satellites of Jupiter, brings the time round for our evening jaunt, and punctually to her time appears our "slipper-boat." We are rowed over the moonlit river by three comely Chinese lasses, and steered by a fourth, all in fits of laughter, but with eyes alert for every passing boat; and grandly they manage the handy little "slipper," until a sweep from the steering oar brings us alongside the first of the flower-boats.

Flower-boat is a pretty term; but a more explicit one would be, floating restaurant. In this first one a dinner is being prepared for a rich Chinaman and

his friends; the tables covered with sweet-meats of every colour, gaudy china, and flowers. Flowers everywhere—on roof, walls, seats; and among them hang, a discordant note in the harmony of colour, glass globular mirrors, such as hang in gin-palaces at home, red, blue, crimson, white, wherever room can be found. The whole is lighted by numberless cheap petroleum lamps, with white shades, which are imported to China by the million. Incongruity is here, as it always is in China—snowy linen, sweet flowers, brilliant lights on one hand, and on the other, dirty, half-clad, cigarette-smoking pirates, spitting, yawning, odorous. These are the waiters resting before the company arrives.

We embark rather than land, to walk through this floating village. Each boat is fastened to its neighbour as they lie side by side, and a plank road runs in front of the bows wide enough for a busy crowd to pass, and for tables to be placed, where, at this hour, sit and jabber, and drink and smoke, a filthy crowd of Chinamen, each in the clothes he has worked in all day. At each of the many tables sit, also, girls—painted, rouged as a China-woman only rouges, till they look like pretty dolls. Pretty, very pretty, some, but emotionless; talked to, but not replying—very weary look these Chinese singing-girls. By a merciful chance there was no singing while we were there—we have heard it before, Chinese singing; so have dwellers in London, who hear it rising nightly from house-top and back-yard. We walk through half a mile of this floating village. After a hard day's work, a man will come here, sit at his ease, drink samshu, look at, perhaps even talk to, one of the pretty dolls for half an hour, yawn, and then go back to the land, to gamble, very likely, until morning in one of the many dens.

On reaching the ship again, we are glad to turn in, after a fatiguing day, and we pass a restless night with the mosquitoes, most of the latter being Canton-bred; but some having stuck to the ship during her ninety-mile trip up the Pearl River.

SHALL I HELP THE MISSIONARIES?

ALL of us are called on to do so some time or other. I hear that in London suburbs interesting young ladies carry about cards, and ask for pence, as school children used to do in West Cornwall.

There it was a regular trade: "Please, m'm, give me a penny for the missionaries." We gave, though we knew the money went in "Tom Trot." At any rate, we were promoting native industry.

A delightful little land that was; how could I ever leave it? It was the men who went out of the East that were the wise ones. Arcadia it would have been, but that there were so few sheep; and they, with fore and hind legs "spanned" that they might not cross the stone hedges. Everybody piped in Arcadia, and everybody sings in West Cornwall. Often, as I walked, half asleep, across from the town whose arms are "St. John's head in a charger," I could hear, mingling with the thud of the all-night-going "stamps," "When shepherds watched . . . and glowry, and glowry shun around." It was a "corps" of little mine-boys, sheltering behind an old wall, and practising carols a month or two before the time; and then I woke up and knew that I was nearing home.

Arcadia? Why, I have ridden out late on Saint John's Eve to a hill-side, six Cornish miles off—there's no night there—to watch the Baal-fires. Then, making for one of them, I have found the whole "tenement" (hamlet) solemnly walking round, hand-in-hand, and, dismounting, have renewed a still older custom, which they had forgotten, by leading my pony round too, and even persuading him to jump across.

You never grow old in a climate where summer is never scorching, while in winter it is almost always "tender weather." Why, when, in the siege of Paris year, and once or twice after, we had real cold and deep snow, they did not know what to make of it; and, not from idleness, but from want of use, they left our one high-road blocked for a fortnight, Her Majesty's mails being brought across the fields by a walking post. I do not know how long the barrier would have lasted, had not at last three waggons from our little foundry made a dash at and broken it through.

Arcadia it is in all save the jobbing in mine shares; and this they learnt from the "tin-ring," that execrable knot of Jews and London Germans who set the prices just contrary to the interest of miners, and "captains," and managers, and shareholders. Why not, argued Arcadia, carry the war into the enemy's country? And so, whenever "tin was up," an old mine or two was started into life, to the extent of

printing prospectuses, patching up an old "whim," and, alas, now and then "salting" the ground with a few samples of ore to catch the eye of the Londoner on the look-out for investments.

But, missions. Yes, Arcadia believed in missions. In religion we were a happy family: the Church and three kinds of Methodists. I was the parson—the only man in the parish, I used to tell them, who could afford to be honest. That was always my plea against disestablishment. It was worth while to have some one who, being independent of class-leaders (mostly mine captains), and circuit stewards (mine pursers), and deacons, could afford to say that it was a burning shame for men to go underground with the constant chance of losing life or limb, and the almost certainty of getting "miners' complaint," for less wage than a pound a week. They smiled, but winced; for it was true. So sure as tin "went down," there came a revival at all the chapels, to foster that "other-worldliness" wherein lies the strength of "tin-rings" and other capitalist abominations. Their preachers' texts might well have been: "What's the use of this world's silver and gold? Leave them to the rich, who, in this life, receive their consolation. Never mind, you make your title safe; you get a first-class ticket to the realms of glory."

That was the principle. Alas, it underlies a good deal of so-called religion, and has always done so.

But in missions we all worked together; they were our chief diversion; the "deputations" were our Grossmiths, our Corney Grains. My dissenting brethren came to my meetings, and I went to theirs. The deputations were mostly returned missionaries, very able men; one was the great authority on the Tonga language, and strengthened my belief in "the sunken Continent of Lemuria," by telling me that Malagase (the Madagascar tongue) has very strong affinities with that of Tonga.

In church our meetings were always very decorous, and the ministers yielded to the "genius loci." I remember the startling gravity with which one, usually a rattling good fellow, told out of my pulpit how he was in a West African town at the time of the "great customs"—the King being dead. He was resting on the shady side of the big square, when "the messenger of death" came by, running and leaping; but, seeing he was a white man, turned aside, and caught sight of a poor

girl, who, tray of fruit on her head, had just come in from the country. "Before she knew who it was, the monster had sidled up to her, and had shorn off her head into his ghastly basket." You may fancy the thrill that went through us.

Equally thrilling was the experience of another missionary, who knew South Africa. "Cape smoke," he said, "was ruining the native body and soul. The chiefs protested against it. He knew one who had travelled hundreds of miles to beg the Cape-Town statesmen to stop the drink traffic. Wherever a canteen was once set up, there it has remained, though the troops for whom it catered have long ago gone home. The mischief is most seen at a native wedding. When I first went out, they used to drink Kafir beer, any quantity of it; and it made them pleasant and good-tempered. I've ridden by and seen them. But before I left the country, the fashion was to order up a dozen or so of Cape smoke, and for all to get mad drunk. And then the scenes that went on—the brutality, the fighting, not seldom the killing and wounding—it was shocking."

That was the sort of thing at Church meetings. At their own they preferred broad farce:

"How did you like it, Eliza Jane?"

"Lor', mum, it was better than the play at last Corpus Christi fair!"

I was there—not at the fair, but at the meeting—and I can well believe the girl was right. That "deputation" was screaming fun. Australia had been his labour-field; and one of his journeys he thus described: "You see, we often have long journeys—take the whole day at it. When I was a bachelor, I used to ride; but after I got married my wife wanted to come, too. And our first journey she had a sickener. We had driven that way three days before, and there was a tiny brook, like what you call Nancherrow River. Well, there had been rain somewhere, and when we got to the place, in coming back, lo and behold, it was a big river. I drove on as if there was nothing in front, though she screamed out: 'Tom, Tom! do stop.' And when I still went on, she cried: 'No, Tom. Nothing shall take me through that.' And out my lady jumped over the back of the cart, and flopped down on the sand. But when she saw me cross, and the water not much over the horse's knees, she began a different note: 'Tom, Tom, do come back! You can't be so cruel. You'll not leave me to die in the wilderness, will

you!' But I stood out stiffly. 'I can't come across again,' says I; 'the horse won't stand it three times. You'll have to get over how you can.' So she began to cry; and by good luck—for I was really frightened to drive back—there, not far up, was a dead gum-tree leaning over the water-course. 'Get into the tree,' says I, 'and walk along.' 'I can't,' says she. 'I should slip over, I'm sure I should. Oh, Tom, Tom! do you want to drown me?' 'Well, if you can't step it, get astraddle, and work your way along.' And she did. You know those trees have no boughs for a long way up. And she was clear of the water. I stuck my feet out wide in the sand, held up my arms, and, 'Now, drop,' says I; and I caught her. And, would you believe it? she's never refused to cross a river since!"

And with stories like that he kept us going for full an hour. No wonder we all went in largely for missionary meetings, for we got a deal of fun out of them, as people in that far-off corner of England were bound to do. And the missionaries I have spoken of had been doing an undoubtedly good work. It is well that the hateful "customs" of the West Coast should be exposed; it is well that the spirit-merchant—a worse foe to native progress than even the witch-doctor who "smells out" those who have stolen the chief's favourite cow—should not have it all his own way; and it is well that a man of some culture and abundant high spirits should go round and cheer those who are moping under the loneliness of a bush-farmer's life. Even missions like Bishop Hannington's and Mr. Ashe's do good, though not as missions. Can it do good to fling pearls before worse than swine? To "preach" to a black Nero who would not listen to the Christian mysteries except they were turned into a drunken jest? That is what one asks, as one reads in Mr. Ashe the revolting story of Mtesa, King of Uganda. I do not think Saint Paul ever went through what Bishop Hannington did. The political persecutions, cruel as the working of a machine, did not begin till much later. Till madman Nero charged the Christians with setting Rome on fire, Paul only suffered from the Jews; and the magistrates wouldn't let them do very much. Why, the people of Lesser Asia were as gentle and as receptive as the old Irish were when Patrick came, or as the Peruvians were when they thought the Spaniards were gods upon earth. Those

black fellows are a different sort. "Images of God, carved in ebony," says old Fuller. Very little of God, I fancy, in a fellow like Mtesa. Yet, even to these, missions do good, because they throw light on them; because they may by-and-by lead some, when we are not in such haste to get rich, to go out with a band of heroes, and put down "great customs," and abolish such Kings as Mtesa. That is how the old knights-errant did; and they it was who prevented Europe, in the dark ages, from being full of white Mtesas, monsters of revolting cruelty, and from having its "great customs" and similar abominations—worse even than the gladiators' shows at heathen Roman funerals. Even in Central Africa, therefore, missions do good by bringing evils to light, and by stirring up philanthropists, like the King of the Belgians, to seriously set about the work of civilising. Such a work as the founding of a great Free Congo State is worth a good many martyrs. I hope the missionaries will not worry the Free Congo State man with much doctrine. If they do, he may puzzle some of them, as that famous Zulu did Bishop Colenso. The Zulus believe that when the hills were young the great Spirit looked on the earth, and there were no men. And, as he looked, there came a rustling in the reeds, and the tribes came forth out of the marsh and spread themselves over the land. The Spirit looked at them carefully, and saw that they were good; whereupon, being pleased, he called the chameleon, and said:

"Go tell the tribes of men that death shall not come amongst them. They shall live for ever." But the chameleon dawdled along the road eating berries; and before he got near his journey's end, it had repented the Spirit that he had given men immortality, for already they had begun to be wicked. So he sent the lizard, saying: "Haste, and if thou comest first, tell the men that death shall be their portion." So the lizard made haste, and death was laid on mankind; and even before the chameleon came to them they began to feel its pangs. Wherefore, when the loiterer arrived and gave his useless message he seemed unto them as one that mocked, and they cursed him, and that is why he totters as he walks, and keeps changing colour.

I would not unteach them that; there is a moral in it. Just as there is in what Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, called "the beautiful myth of the Fall." Let them

believe what they like about the creation, provided they give up the witch-doctor and his works.

In Africa, the missionary may do great good, provided he is supplemented with the unselfish white organiser. But then it is so hard to find such an organiser. We think we have him in India. We profess that we hold India simply for the good of the native, educating him up to self-government. All the young gentlemen who read as if they were Chinese preparing for the Literary Exam., and then go and live their best years in an unpleasant climate, and retire on a comfortable pension to Bath or Cheltenham, do so out of pure self-denial. They would, no doubt, much prefer farming in Manitoba or diamond-digging at the Cape.

Out of India, however, the unselfish white organiser is a very rare bird. For lack of him, our missions in New Zealand broke down. We taught the Maori that Christianity means charity and self-denial, and doing to others as you would be done by; and then we went on filching his land, setting tribe claim against tribe claim, buying of chiefs whom we bribed to sell the property of their clans, till at last we wore out his patience. He got to look on bishops and ministers of all kinds as crafty forerunners of the land shark; and, as he had outgrown the nature-worship—much like that of the old Gael—which lives in his old songs, he elaborated for himself, out of the Bible that we had put into his hands, a travesty of the Old Testament, the chief article of which was: "Every Maori on his own plot of land and under his own kauri tree."

The new religionists carried their imitation so far that they took to barking like dogs—hence the name "Hau-hau"—because Gideon's chosen band, dog-like, lapped up the water instead of drinking it.

Elsewhere, in the South Pacific, the missionary has been invaluable. He revealed to us the horrors of "blackbirding." But for him that hateful traffic might have gone on merrily, and Her Majesty's ships cruising about would have been none the wiser. Here, too, the death of a Bishop (Pattison) helped to call attention to an evil that is only scotched.

India? So much to be said on both sides. The Buddhist already has a creed which ought to make him ten times better than most Christians are.

"Why don't you turn Christian, you who are such a thoroughly good Christian in your

ways?" said my father to a Cinghalese gentleman who had fought against him in the insurrectionary war, but who nursed him like a brother through a bad attack of dysentery.

"I've been too often on the beach at Colombo," was the sad reply.

He had watched the rowdy sailors and soldiers, who, on Sundays, were marched off to church like a flock of sheep.

Lady Dilke tells of a missionary in Kashmir who, "instead of identifying himself with the governing body"—the temptation to the missionary in India—is the trusted friend of priests, fakirs, and temple-guardians. When they were visiting a temple, "Please do as I do," said he. "Take off your shoes before you put on these slippers; they feel so strongly about it. The wife of a late Viceroy is still execrated by the Sikhs because she would go into this temple without taking off her boots."

Making converts will no more be the wise missionary's aim in India than elsewhere. The thing is to saturate the people with a truly Christian spirit; and how few men or women are capable of doing this! How few are even capable of going out of their own class and putting themselves in the place of "our poorer brethren" at home! But some are capable. Lady Dilke tells of a missionary's wife. Her husband is one of the "pony-trap" men, whom somebody, from a worldly point of view, praises, "because they teach the native a higher standard of comfort, and, therefore, make him keener after gain." Yet, when she went back after some weeks' absence, the villagers covered her gates with flowers, lighted up their huts, and, turning out in a body, met the bullock-cart in which she was travelling, and themselves drew her to her door.

I don't think any of these villagers will become such a questionable Christian as a friend of mine met on the African West Coast. This precious convert, whom drink had made confiding, told how the silly neighbours used no locks. "Over their barns they just nail up a verse of the Koran. But I laugh at such superstition, and go in and help myself when I want."

And how would the lady or her husband treat her converts at the Communion Table? That has often been a practical difficulty in India. Are whites and niggers to come up in the same batch? If not, what becomes of the "freedom in Christ,"

which is the compensation for breaking caste and sundering family ties?

A clear missionary disaster was the Abyssinian War, and the break-up of that Christian Empire which counterbalanced these dervishes. A meddling German Jew, Stern, wanted to force his new faith on the Abyssinian Archbishop. Theodore got angry, and our Foreign Office pigeon-holed his autograph letter to the Queen. But I am not talking of missions to other Christians, which are offensive and often insulting. China is non-Christian; yet there, I take it, missions have already done such mischief as years of effort will not make up for. When I was young, I can remember a silly squire at a missionary meeting shouting out: "A million Bibles for China! We must fling them on the coast, and send them up the rivers. Cast your bread on the waters." The next thing I heard of was the Taeping War. A poor student of Kwang-si, Hung-sen-tsuen, had failed in several examinations. His disappointment told on his health—he was a Southerner of Hakka race, many of whom are epileptics. He saw visions; and what he had read about the Canaanite wars in a Bible that he had picked up, made him fancy he had a mission. He would be the Joshua to destroy the Canaanite Manchus, and bring back the old Mings. He began by going to the "Hall of Literature"—every village has one; a pattern surely for us—and destroying "the tablet of Confucius," on which are inscribed the names of the villagers who have deserved well of their country, and why. Then he preached; and the Bibles, largely spread among the impressive Southerners, helped him. Soon his followers were reckoned by the thousand. The Government was bankrupt, shattered by the iniquitous French and English opium war. There was no one to make head against him, and he soon developed into the Tien-Wang (heavenly King), a sort of Chinese John of Leyden, and, seizing Nanking, lived there for twelve years in much the same style in which John lived at Münster. Both sides committed the most fearful cruelties. The Taepings on principle—like the Jews, they were "to spare neither old man nor maiden, infant nor suckling"—the Imperialists in sheer despair. They were in the hardest fix in which a nation ever was. "The foreign devils" insisted on their indemnity of twenty million taels; and, at the same time, most of the foreign officials more

than favoured the rebels. But for Gordon, the one honest white man in China, the dynasty must have fallen. Whether Gordon should not have at once thrown up his command when, after he had undertaken to save the lives of a score of Wangs who had surrendered, the Imperial General stealthily tortured them, and cut off their heads, is a question. It must have been fearful to be the ally and mainstay of monsters who on one occasion killed in cold blood sixteen thousand captives. Anyhow, the Taeping outbreak was prepared by Christian teaching ill-understood, and by the reckless diffusion of Bibles. The Chinese have no class-distinctions. They are the one nation which shows no trace of conquest—for the Manchus are few, and came late—of that old-standing evil which, among us, is answerable for our different treatment of "woman" and "lady." Yet even they don't allow "barbers, stage-players, or executioners" to compete in the exams; and the big-drum men must in their view be stage-players of a sort. So must that Scotch missionary who, when the people of one city would not listen to his preaching—indeed, quietly took him and all his belongings to the river-bank, and bade him begone—built a bamboo balcony in the next place he came to, and made his two children, dressed in full Highland costume, let down tracts with hook and line to the crowd that soon gathered. Chinamen never take anything for nothing; so he who captured the tract put a few cash—square hole, you know, in the middle—on the hook, and in this way the good man made a sensible addition to his income. What good he did to the cause of missions, I can't say. It is everywhere a difficult question. Few will go so far as Canon Taylor, and declare it a fraud, and cry up the greater excellence of Mahomedanism—the religion of the brutal slave-dealers. Anyhow, as a moral police, missionaries have done immense good almost everywhere; but in New Zealand they have failed. Will they succeed in China, if they go on as they are going?

A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

By ADA L. HARRIS.

CHAPTER I.

My first impressions of Woodburn Hall were not favourable. To begin with, the

name was far too grandiloquent for the unassuming and depressing building to which it was applied, arousing, as it did, visions of marble terraces; green, undulating lawns shaded by giant cedar-trees, oak, or elm; a carriage-drive of a mile or two through a beautiful park; and, within, a lofty vestibule, hung with family portraits and the heads and antlers of deer; a library containing a thousand or so of rare volumes and manuscripts; funereal four-posters in all the bed-chambers; a great deal of mouldy tapestry, and—a ghost!

As it was, I saw a dingy brick edifice, neither new nor old, of two storeys in height, standing at a distance of barely fifty yards from its entrance gates, and, though decidedly, what is termed in the advertisements, a gentleman's residence, possessed of no attributes worthy of admiration; and having, moreover, a certain indescribable and impalpable aspect of gloom and despondency. There were two or three rows of discontented-looking windows, and an inhospitable door. Altogether, my fond imagination and mental visions, which had served to while away the tedium of a six hours' railway journey through a flat and uninteresting country, of a noble mansion and footmen in plush inexpressibles, took flight at once and for ever as my lumbering, ramshackle, countrified vehicle crawled through the modest gateway of my destination.

Where were the lofty wrought-iron gates, not to mention the picturesque flower-covered entrance lodge, through which I had pictured myself as passing?

I let down the crazy, rattling window of the cab, and hailed its equally crazy-looking and disreputable Jehu.

"Stop!" I cried aloud. "Are you sure you're right? It's Woodburn Hall I want, and——"

"And it's Woodburn Hall yer've got. What more d'yer want?"

"Oh, all right; drive on!" I responded, weakly.

But he was not disposed to let me off so easily.

"Party of the name of Wild yer wants, don't yer?"

I nodded my head.

"Well, this yer's Woodburn Hall, and a party o' the name o' Wild lives yer. Be yer satisfied now?"

I suppose I signified that I was, for he continued his crab-like, jolting motion along the semicircular gravel track which lay in front of the house, drew up at the

door, and, descending from his perch, rang the bell. I could have cried with vexation, I was so disappointed! I had been led, or, to tell the truth—which is generally unpleasant, though salutary—had led myself to expect great things of this new situation, for—it is of no use to hide the fact any longer—I was only the new governess!

Only a governess; and what was worse still, a governess who had never yet succeeded in retaining any of her situations for longer than three or four months at a time; the reason being, as the ladies of the various families in which I had been employed in an educational capacity, asserted, that I was "too flighty"—which, being interpreted, meant, I was too good-looking for the post. I suppose it does sound shocking to make such a remark with regard to my own personal appearance, but it was the melancholy truth; else why should Mrs. Glubbins, who had a gawky, loose-jointed, sandy-haired son, rising twenty, declare that "I attracted dear Alfred's attention by wearing a fringe;" and further remark, "that a governess who wasted her time curling her hair, when she might be more profitably employed setting the children sums, was not worthy of the name, and must 'try elsewhere'?" And why, too, did Mrs. Ricketts, whose husband she was herself wont to describe trenchantly as a "philanderer," feel herself called upon to remark that, in her opinion, a pair of blue glasses constituted a necessary and natural part of a governess's outfit?

And now that I had, in answer to an advertisement, secured my present, and I hoped more permanent post, whence rose the sense of disappointment which I have represented myself as feeling? Why, the fact was, I had imbibed, through the medium of various novelettes and magazines—which I had been accustomed to devour in secret and the seclusion of my own bedroom; for surely the mind of one, whose walk in life was to teach the young idea how to shoot, ought to find all that was necessary for its relaxation between the covers of "Mangnall's Questions"—certain romantic and pernicious views with regard to my future life.

I am writing now from a different standpoint, and by the light of the acquired wisdom of later years. Nevertheless, I am ashamed to confess that, in undertaking this present situation of governess at Woodburn Hall, I had calculated not so much on the salary as on the chance of

meeting there, among the guests and habitués of the mansion, some individual, some fairy prince, who might raise me from my situation of a tutorial Cinderella to a giddy height among the upper ten.

The governesses—who were rather a favourite type of character in the style of literature (mostly in the form of supplements) which I affected—were invariably beautiful, and generally married an Earl or Viscount who happened to be on a visit to the house in which they played a subordinate part, and, after triumphing successfully over nineteen pages of trials and mortifications, in small type, came out magnificently in white satin and the family diamonds on page twenty.

Thus it was that Woodburn Hall, in theory, had excited the fondest hopes and anticipations; and Woodburn Hall, in reality, had proved a fraud, and dashed them to the ground. A respectable, but gloomy-looking family residence at the best. Not at all the sort of place which was filled from garret to cellar for the shooting, and where one might meet "Debrett's Peerage," in knickerbockers, on the landing, and have the House of Lords looking in at the schoolroom window, in flannels.

I was young and I was foolish. I am now considerably older and infinitely wiser. With this apology, then, let me pass on, for I am aware that I have kept my charioteer ringing at the bell an unconscionable time.

CHAPTER II.

TWICE did my son of Nimshi tug at the bell-handle without producing any visible effect. Just, however, as he was about to apply himself to it for a third time, the portal opened suddenly and noiselessly without any warning.

"Yer takes yer time about it," said Jehu, sarcastically.

"I thought I heard the bell ring," replied the woman who now appeared upon the threshold, "but wasn't sure, 'cause master's playin' on the pianner, with his feet on the treadles, and I didn't know but what you might be part o' the toon."

And as she spoke, through the open doorway there came a gust of music, which finally resolved itself into the March from "Tannhäuser," played by the hand of a master, which made me quake as I remembered the paucity of my own musical attainments. Fortunately, my pupil—for there was but one—was a little girl of seven, whom I had undertaken to instruct

in the rudiments of English, French, music, and drawing, so that I might be able to pass muster. I was pretty confident about the French and drawing, as I had spent a year at school in Paris before my father died, and I had a certificate for the other accomplishment. Anyhow, I was glad to get out of the rickety conveyance in which I had traversed the intervening miles between the village of Woodburn and Little Pudsey, that being the nearest station to the Hall. I had not as yet seen anything of the village, and concluded that the Hall lay on the outskirts; and in this supposition I was correct—that is, if a place consisting of an ale-house, a dozen cottages, and a horse-trough can be considered to possess outskirts. Talking of outskirts, however, reminds me of one other thing.

The woman who held the door open, inviting me to enter, and who seemed a cross between a housekeeper and lady's-maid, was of such a thin, spare figure, and, withal, apparently possessed of such a distaste of anything superfluous, either of body or apparel, that the rusty black silk in which she was arrayed, might have been made out of an umbrella-case. A cap with a pink bow was the only sign of frivolity about her.

I entered the hall, which was tiled in black and white, and, as I stood watching the safe descent of my luggage from the roof of the cab, those wonderful strains of music floated down the staircase and seemed to envelope me in a flood of harmony. I could have stood and listened, heedless of everything, had not the lean one—whose name, on subsequent enquiry, turned out to be Martha Horrocks—desired me to follow her and superintend the disposal of my baggage, and remarked—apropos of the smuts which adorned the most prominent portions of my countenance—that I "might like to clean myself a little before I saw the missis."

I assented, nothing loth, though full of suppressed curiosity on the subject of my employers, who, it had just occurred to me, might turn out to be more interesting than, in my temporary depression, I had supposed. Particularly did I desire to see "the master," the man I had heard playing with such remarkable talent and expression, and whose music, even now, penetrated in gusts into the small, but not uncomfortable, upper chamber which was allotted to me. My previous experience being, that everything which was cracked and unpresentable was assigned—as being quite good enough—to the governess's

room, I was agreeably surprised as I washed my hands in a basin which matched the ewer, and was not at variance with the soap-dish, and twisted up my hair before a mirror which was not liable to an action by reason of its libellous misrepresentations of the human race.

My spirits were beginning to rise again; after all, I might be very comfortable here, though not in the way I had expected, and—one never knew what might turn up!

A knock at the door disturbed these gratifying, but unpraiseworthy, reflections, and a voice informed me that the "missis" was ready to see me, after I had partaken of some refreshment.

But I preferred to get the interview over first; so—stating falsely that I was not at all hungry, and would prefer to see Mrs. Wild at once, if convenient—I followed the bony handmaiden, who was the only individual connected with the household I had seen as yet, into the presence of the lady of the house. She received me in what was, evidently, the drawing-room, the chief and only noticeable article of furniture in which was a magnificent grand piano, by Erard, which was standing open. There were two people in the room; one, the lady herself, sitting by the fire, and another, a man, standing with his back to me and looking out of the window, half-hidden by the curtains.

As soon as I looked at the mistress of the house, I was convinced that she, at any rate, was a nonentity. A small, nervous, colourless, insignificant personage, whose fingers were never still, but always plucking at her dress, or fidgeting with a ribbon, or smoothing her lace; with pale, washed-out eyes, which seemed to be perpetually trying to look over her shoulder, or round the corner, at something horrible.

She welcomed me kindly, but timidly, hoping I had had a good journey, and found my room comfortable, and that I should get on well with my pupil, and not find her very backward for her age, and so on, all the time casting scared and anxious glances out of the corners of her eyes, at the half-concealed figure in the window. At last, as though in answer to these mute appeals, he turned round and, emerging from his retirement, abruptly remarked that his experience with regard to the child was, that she was a great deal too forward, and that he hoped I should do my best to correct this fault.

Then, without further parley, he strode across the room and disappeared, turning, however, at the door to give an impressive, but inscrutable, glance at his wife. To my surprise—who had conjured up in my mind, while listening to his remarkable playing, a thin, dark-haired, and bespectacled individual, with round shoulders and sallow complexion—my employer was a tall and rather stout man, with sandy hair and beard, and eyes which gave up the idea that he was either near-sighted or indolent, from his keeping them half-closed, gentlemanly, and with, in spite of his curt manner and address, a remarkably agreeable voice in speaking.

Such, at least, was my impression at the time of this, my first interview. At the same time, there was something peculiar about him; something that made you think of the man long after he had quitted you, and wonder what was the cause of the impression which he seemed to leave behind him—a sort of dominating influence, inexplicable, but unmistakable.

His wife, however, seemed distinctly relieved at his absence, though she had appeared to quail for a second beneath his parting glance, as it rested upon her. She struck me as being older than he, and I was also convinced, in my own mind, as by a kind of second-sight, that she had had money, and he had married her for the sake of it, and perhaps it had not turned out to be so much as he had expected.

At any rate, before I had been half an hour in her society, I was conscious of feeling sorry for her, though I did not know why. She seemed so nervous and excitable, starting when a cinder flew out of the fire, and turning visibly paler when there was the sound of a masculine foot-step crunching on the gravel walk without. At the end of the half-hour, during which she rambled on in a rather disjointed fashion, hoping that I should not find it very dull, and that Florence would be good and not give me too much trouble—this last more than half-doubtfully—I quitted her. She shook hands with me limply, but cordially, and I left her sitting there alone by the fire, with her restless fingers twitching and pulling at her handsome silk dress, alternately crumpling and smoothing the lace which trimmed it, and always casting uneasy glances over her shoulder, as though afraid of what she might see there.